

# SOCIETY MENACED WITH THE MERCENARY MOTHER

Daughters Are To-day Brought Up by Scheming Mothers to Be Sold Into Loveless Marriages for Money, Says Rex Beach in Remarkable Interview.

In "The Auction Block" Rex Beach depicted a girl brought up by a scheming mother with the object of marrying a rich husband. Some critics asserted that the character of the mother was untrue and the representation of a social condition exaggerated. In the following interview Mr. Beach discusses the problem of the modern young woman and marriage, and asserts, in answer to his critics, that "marriage slavery" is an increasing and alarming evil.

**M**ODERN young women marry for money to-day than perhaps ever before," declares Rex Beach. "Marriage has become less a union of love and more an alliance based on material considerations. Such a condition is dangerous to society and a menace to the future. For this condition— which I assert is a condition—present day mothers are to blame.

"Marriage as a means of social and pecuniary betterment is hardly as 'old as the hills' but women have undoubtedly taken into themselves husbands for what those husbands could give from the very beginnings of human society. But in our age and country a new and sinister figure has arisen, the scheming, mercenary mother who deliberately rears daughters as a marketable commodity, who trains daughters with the idea of entering marriage as a profession; who discourages and blights all ideals of romance and love, and on the other hand encourages the thought of matrimony as a means of attaining wealth and social position. This type of mother is becoming a serious menace.

"While I believe the majority of mothers are real mothers, and while I do not believe the great bulk of humanity is depraved, an increasing percentage of mothers are neither honest nor good. They are bringing up daughters to enter lives both dishonest and immoral, to sell them into a slavery no whit better than that of the seraglio. Marriage for money, one of our gravest social evils, and one for which mothers are mainly responsible, is a cancer in our national life.

"In writing 'The Auction Block' I endeavored to picture a girl brought up for the sole purpose of being sold into marriage for money. I pictured the mother as one who regarded her daughter as a salable product. Every phase of the girl's education and training tended toward one thing, the attracting of a rich man and his capture in marriage. Some critics said this type of mother does not exist and that the book represented no general social condition. In fact a few said the story was impossible.

"When I wrote 'The Auction Block' I had a certain family in mind. The story as I wrote it was true to life as I observed it. And I can only say that I have portrayed no isolated case, nor do I believe I have exaggerated a condition of modern life. Many girls are to-day raised with the object of being married off to rich men. Love has less to do with courtship and marriage in America than it ever had. And herein is an ominous evil, a demoralizing condition, a problem perhaps as momentous as that of corrupt politics or dishonest business.

"In my personal experience I have come across many instances where mothers brought up their daughters as one rears a prize horse. The object is sale. Such a mother brings a daughter into the world and educates her with a view to an advantageous marriage. The daughter is dressed so she may attract attention. Often the entire family is deprived of necessities that the salable member may be elaborately groomed.

"Such mothers exhibit their daughters as displays are made in the windows of department stores. There is no emotion about it. It is calculated, coldly, selfishly. In fact the modern mother who thus brings up a daughter is not unselfishly sacrificing. In most cases the mother is on the job to see that when the bargain is consummated she 'gets hers.' While this evil is less common in the West

and middle West than in the East you will find such mothers in almost any town of fair size in America.

"New York is the great marriage market. When they can afford it— and hundreds make sacrifices to afford it—these mothers bring their daughters to New York. The daughter is exploited, exhibited. One of the common methods is to get the girl on the stage. This advertising is most conspicuous. But the stage is not the only show window. Whatever the method the girl must meet men, and rich men, and the purpose is marriage, and for money alone.

"Not whatever the condition of life throughout the country the entire education of too many young women is colored with the idea of marriage for money. Romance is not dead; romance will never die. But it enters into the lives of young women less and less.

"Marriage as a profession is perhaps one of the most ignoble professions. Praught with evils, tending toward social corruption, the dissolution of the home, the modern marriage sale of young women demands attention and condemnation. Women are not prize horses. And such traffic as places them in the class of blue ribbon winners is demoralizing.

"As conditions of life in this country have become more and more settled the opportunities for getting money have become increasingly difficult. We are getting down to a social condition similar to that abroad. We have evolved a caste based very largely on wealth. We don't hear much of good families in America. Our aristocracy is bred in a generation. With money people can have leisure, education, comfort; they can travel, attain culture. But the prime necessity is money. The line of social demarcation has become plainly drawn; on the one side people with money, on the other people without money.

"With such a condition it is inevitable that the people without money should develop schemes to get money; the struggle becomes more and more intense, and in this marriage plays its part.

"One means of jumping the line of social demarcation and of getting money is obviously marriage. Thus, coveting the money enjoyed by the rich, mothers bring up their daughters for the profession in which they can get it. A young woman is told she must advance materially and socially. Marriage is the open sesame to the cave of treasure.

"With good looks, education and charm there is no reason why any girl, however humble her birth, however poor, cannot attain any position socially.

"Society here has undergone a change. The old New York 'Four Hundred' idea is exploded. New York society is not limited to four hundred. In fact, there are many circles of society. Anybody with money can enjoy a society quite independent of the Astor-Vanderbilt clique. But whatever the society, money is the means of getting there.

"What is the modern girl brought up to desire? In many cases not a marriage for love, a home and children, but a home in New York, a yacht, a winter at Palm Beach, a tour of Europe in the summer. That is the American idea of feminine success.

"Reaching the proper age a young woman fares forth on the great adventure. The poor but earnest lover is looked upon askance, and should the girl listen to the pleadings of a sincere heart poor in the world's goods the mother promptly appears. 'Tis the modern mother, and not the father, who gives the impetuous Romeo the boot.

"Finally the gilded man appears. He may be young, or old, or very old. Every art is used to capture him. He is of course led to believe the girl loves him. Perhaps the end is attained—a religious ceremony marks the bargain. As for the woman—what nobility, character or honesty can long

remain in her? Has she any purpose now in life? Pleasure—and too often dissipation.

"With the conservation of wealth we have developed a great luxurious class in America. It finds its most blatant expression in New York. In New York you find a vast class given to fast living and extravagance. Here you find women who have sold themselves into a moneyed marriage endeavoring to find pleasure, excitement, thrills—to substitute for the essential happiness of life a factious exhilaration in dissipation.

"Generally men are not to blame for the marriage evil. Women are more selfish than men. Women put more value on money than men. Women rely more on appearances than men. Girls are brought up by selfish mothers to be fundamentally selfish. They are taught to look out for their own comfort and to see that they get that comfort. If you doubt my statement mark how women monopolize seats in a street car. How they glare at a man who attempts to move by them. How a man will give a woman a seat, while a woman will not move aside when she occupies the space of two seats.

"Go to the theatre and observe women blocking the doorways, frivolously chattering and gossiping. And they never budge or step aside—which is but one manifestation of feminine selfishness. Women's consideration of marriage is largely selfish.

"Women's selfishness is considerably due to the chivalry of American men. In this country nothing is too good for a woman. No sacrifice can be too great for a woman. A woman must have the best, whatever happens. Women must be sheltered, protected, saved from all anxieties. Women must not work.

"Abroad women work in the fields. Among primitive races women were the hardest workers.

"Men are essentially honest. A rich man who marries a poor girl has nothing to gain, financially or socially. Any dishonesty in such marriages is with the women. I am advancing no argument against a poor girl marrying a rich man—if she loves that man. Money does not count where there is real affection. But mark the difference in the public regard of a man who marries a rich woman as against the tacit acceptance of a poor girl who marries a rich man.

"In the Southwest there are immensely wealthy families with big landed interests. Often daughters inherit these estates. They usually marry poor cowboys and cattle men. No one asks any questions there. But in New York a man who marries a rich woman, in the general opinion, simply takes to himself a bunch of coin. The sordid marrying of women for money has become an accepted thing in the big cities.

"Loveless marriages are demoralizing to our social life. The home is the bulwark of society, of a nation's integrity. Women who marry for money do not make a home. If they become mothers, they make poor mothers. Better, too often, if they brought no children into the world. The children of such unions develop into the spendthrifts, idlers, libertines, degenerates and parasites of society.

"Women who marry commercially lack ideals. Motherhood must have ideals. Women who marry for money find marriage irksome. They supply the courts with scandals. Such a condition inevitably does not make for permanency in the domestic relation. This explains the increase of divorces. This is the only good thing in a bad business. Divorce is the only way out.

"All women should be self-supporting, and thus self-respecting. No woman who receives more from a man than she gives to him in return, in love, service or inspiration, can be self-respecting. The woman who sells herself into marriage without love is a cheat. She is in every sense dishonest. The rite of marriage cannot make her respectable.

"Evils must be eradicated at their root. Mothers must begin right with their daughters. Instead of rearing girls in idleness, with the idea ultimately of getting money by marriage, they should rear them to be self-supporting. There is no reason why any girl should not work. There is no

reason why any woman should not be self-supporting. Girls should be raised to enter the game of life with men. Independent, a girl can then choose her mate; she can make her choice between a beautiful alliance and an immoral slavery.

"When women on a large scale enter actively into our economic life we shall attain a better balance. Women of course cannot at once enter all professions. This not because of their sex, but because of lack of training.

"Vast fields of usefulness and labor are open to women. Women are now doing things men have done exclusively heretofore. I believe in the future of women. I believe the remedy for the mercenary marriage lies in woman's economic independence. I believe the future will see the great majority economically free.

"Should women enter business? There is no reason a woman should not enter any business in which men engage. A good business woman would make all the better wife and mother. Women in business will have a salutary effect on men. Women can help to correct many business and financial evils and to solve difficult economic problems. I foresee a time when there will be great women bankers, merchants, financiers. Women are entering law. I can conceive of women as judges and magistrates. In fact there is no limit to what they may attain.

"Many men noted for their caution and level headedness owe their success to the counsel of their wives. Frequently the wife has the better business head of the two. Why should that wife not be in business? It is sheer economic waste for a woman with latent business talent to devote herself to the routine of domestic drudgery.

"I am not speaking of rattle brained women, but of women of intelligence. Women are by nature more cautious and suspicious than men. Caution and suspicion are prime business qualifications. Men are prone to be trustful and overenthusiastic. Nothing in the world would be more difficult than the floating of an enterprise by a crooked promoter among women.

"When women share the business world with men many of our tangles will unravel. Their cooperation will be infinitely helpful. They will temper and normalize finance. When they share the world of endeavor with men they will break down the barriers of men's mistaken chivalry—a chivalry which is unjust because it underestimates and weakens women. When women make good in the professions they will abolish marriage as a profession.

"Toward this end the mothers of today must train their daughters—the wives and mothers of the future."

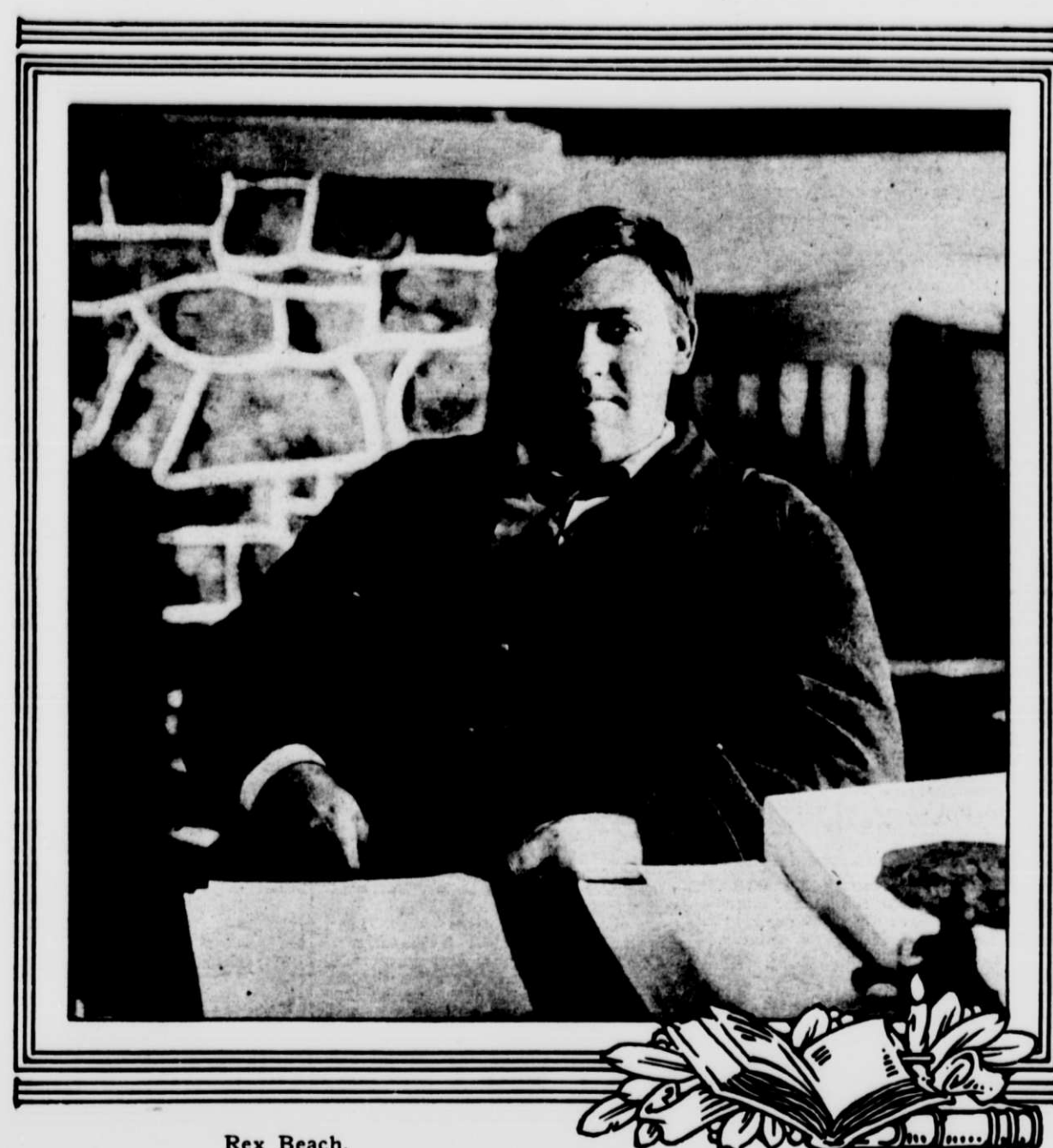
## TAXI BY TELEPHONE

**H**ELLO, taxicab bureau! This is Mr. Smith, 748 West Seventy-second street. Have a public taxi sent to my house as soon as possible. Good-by.

There is a possibility that in the near future such orders may be sent and that New Yorkers wishing to hire public taxis, instead of taxicabs operated by private concerns, will be able to do so by telephoning to the taxicab bureau and ordering their cabs. At present Commissioner Bell of the Department of Licenses, of which the taxicab division is a branch, has under consideration a plan for the installation and operation of a telephone system connecting all public hack stands in the city with a central station through which it will be possible to order taxis.

The plan originated when the Aldermen passed an ordinance, later signed by Mayor Mitchell, making it compulsory for every cab with a meter affixed to be licensed as a taxicab bureau as a public taxicab. Those familiar with the situation realized that the new ordinance was a blow at private taxicab concerns which were operating taxis from garages and charging rates in excess of those stipulated by law for public hacks. The amendment to the ordinance not only means that private operators will have their taxis licensed as public hacks if they intend operating them with meters, but it also means that they will have to charge the rates specified by law. However, they have the alternative of removing the meters from their vehicles.

Assuming that the courts uphold



Rex Beach.

the ordinance and the private owners remove the meters, the public hackmen will be placed at a serious disadvantage in competing with the private concerns. The private concerns will not gain their advantage through lower rates or better service, but through their telephone connections; it is easy to call taxis by telephone, but not so easy to get a public hack in the same way.

There is no desire on the part of the city authorities to wage war on the private concerns, but the idea is to install a telephone system so that the public may enjoy lower rates and better accommodations. It is obvious that if the public hackmen and the private owners are made to compete against each other the public will be the gainer in lower rates, better service and cleaner vehicles. But before the public hackman can be a competitor of the private owner he must enjoy the same advantages, namely, the use of a telephone system by which it will be possible for patrons to call up public hack stands and order their vehicles from them just as they now order them from private garages.

Commissioner Bell has two plans under consideration. The first plan has to do with the installation of a central switchboard in the taxicab bureau or in a building in the center of the city. There will be a number of operators at work day and night, in charge of a supervisor. It shall be the duty of these operators to receive all calls from outside sources ordering taxicabs and to connect the customer with the public hack stand most convenient to him.

For instance, if Mr. Smith of West Seventy-second street wanted to order a taxi he would telephone to the taxicab bureau. The operator would pick out the nearest public hack stand and connect the patron with the stand. It would then be a simple matter for the patron to order the taxi direct from the stand.

The other plan which the Commissioner has under consideration is to have the telephone company act as the transmitting agent. Such a plan would obviate the necessity of the

city's going into the telephone business for the sake of the public hackmen. This plan may not be adopted because of the reluctance of the telephone people to operate a "one way line." Another feature to which the company probably would object is that it would mean too much work for the operators in looking up the various public hack stands.

## VEST POCKET LEGACIES

**M**ISERS' hoards have been found in all kinds of queer places. The experience of Postmaster Hazleton of Marysville, Mich., proves that a man may bank money against his will and be made right glad after many days.

The postmaster made a trip to Port Huron to do some purchasing. That was months ago. He took a \$100 bill along to meet the proposed outlay. After he had named everything he needed and the articles were being wrapped up he looked for the \$100 bill—and looked in vain.

Search everywhere was made, in garments and along the street to the point where the postmaster had left the interurban car and then in the car itself. No trace of the bill was found and the police department and the Sheriff were notified of the loss. It made things a little inconvenient for Mr. Hazleton, because every man can't lose \$100 without having his finances thrown out of adjustment.

After things had been arranged to smooth over the loss the postmaster placed a pencil in his vest pocket one day, and noted its disappearance. He investigated and found a hole. In the search something crinkled. It was the \$100 bill. As the postmaster had adjusted himself to the loss he called the situation "an absolute find of \$100."

Mortimer Sheridan of Brooklyn placed a \$500 bill in the lining of his high silk hat one night while with a jolly birthday party. The next day he was short the amount and absolutely forgot about the high hat incident.

After worrying a bit about it he concluded to accept the loss philosophically and say nothing to any one. Time went on. Sheridan only wore the silk hat on state occasions and

these did not come often with him. The hat did him very nicely for five years longer. For his daughter's wedding his wife persuaded him to buy a new hat more in the mode.

The youth who delivered the new high hat to Sheridan lingered until he attracted attention. Finally he said: "If you haven't any use for that old high hat, Mr. Sheridan, I'd like to take it along with me. I sell all the old hats we get at the store to a second hand man."

"Sure, you can have it," answered Sheridan. "It's been a good hat to me in a general way, but every time I've looked at it since I lost \$500 a few years ago I remember I had it on that unlucky night. So, it's better out of my sight."

"Well, wife, how do you like my new beaver?" asked Sheridan after the youth had left. In the conversation that followed Mrs. Sheridan learned of the disposition of the old hat.

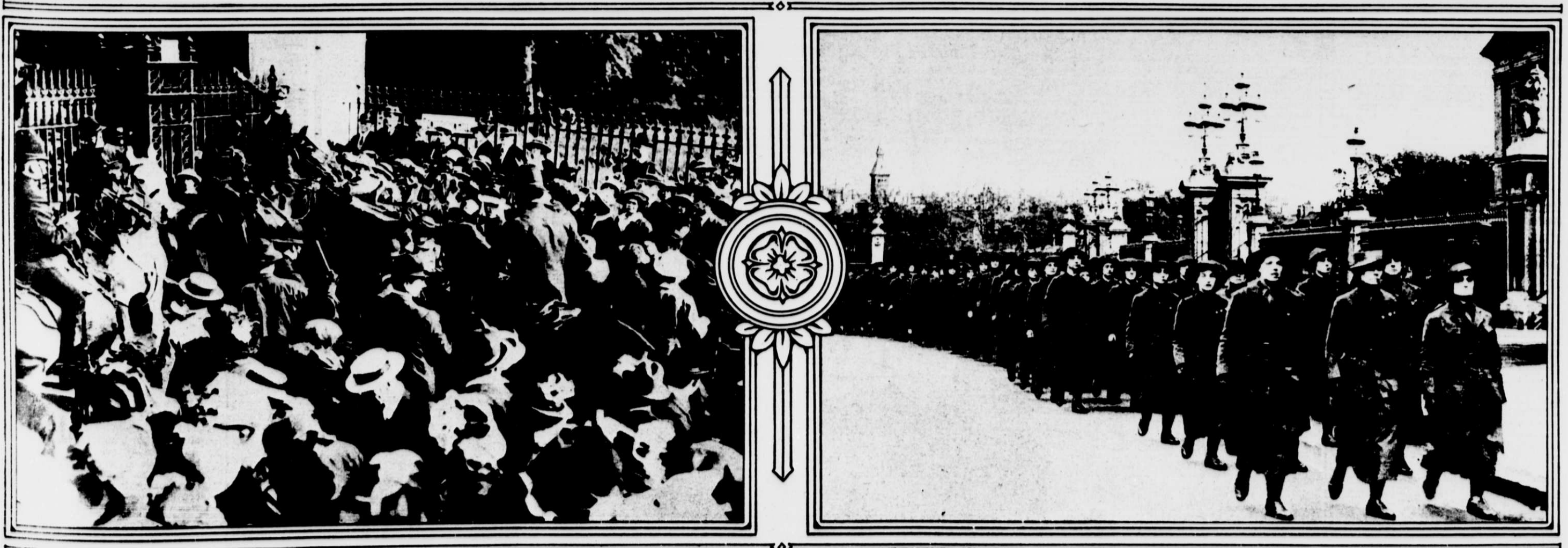
"Did you look in the lining of it?" she asked archly. "I read the other day of a man who always put his spare change there so his wife would not know where to find it when he got home."

But Mrs. Sheridan had only reached the word "lining" before Mr. Sheridan's recant memory brought the incident back in a great flood of recollection. Wherever the remembrance of it had been stored up only the scientists may say, but at any rate it came to the owner of the old and the new hat with an overwhelming rush.

Without taking the trouble to remove his new high hat he bolted out of the house in chase of his old one. He caught the startled youth by the arm three blocks down the avenue and wrenched the old beaver from his grip. Tearing the cover from the box, he brought forth the hat he had used as a bank and plunged his hand in the lining. Withdrawing it his gladdened eyes beheld the \$500 bill clutched between his fingers.

"Here, son, here's \$10 for you," he said to the open mouthed youth, "and you can't have the hat now. It's been too good a bank. I'm going to keep it for luck." And the hat still hangs on the Sheridan hall rack.

## Militant Women of England Believe Pent Up Patriotism Has More Than One Outlet



Militancy before Buckingham Palace last summer.

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Militancy before the Palace a short time ago.